COMIC SHOP NEWS™

253

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The Bat--The Cat--The Penguin--The Comics!

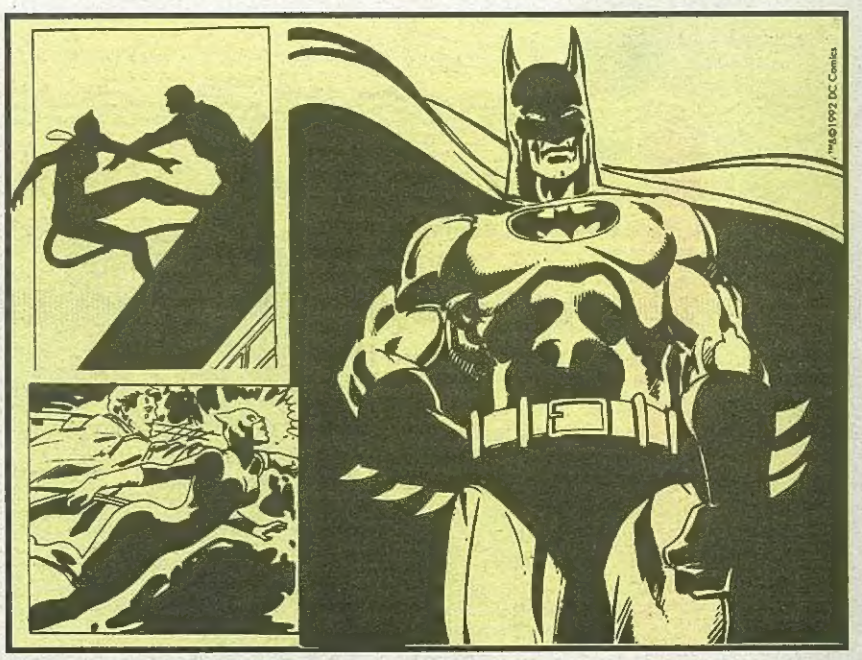
Remember what the first ***Batman*** film did for the Joker? Even before the film was released, fans were scurrying for any comics appearance of the Clown Prince of Crime--alas, there were all too few new appearances, and many fans couldn't afford the higher prices of the hard-to-find back issues. This summer, DC has made it much easier for the fan who wants to see more of the Penguin and the Catwoman, the two villains from ***Batman Returns;*** they'll have to look no further than the new comics rack at their local comic shop.

Catwoman Defiant, a 48-page prestige-format one-shot written by Peter Milligan and illustrated by Tom Grindberg and Dick Giordano, spotlights Catwoman--but in an odd turnabout, Catwoman becomes someone else's pawn in a scheme to capture a crime boss--and Batman finds himself in forced to rescue her! This special one-shot is scheduled for June 11th release.

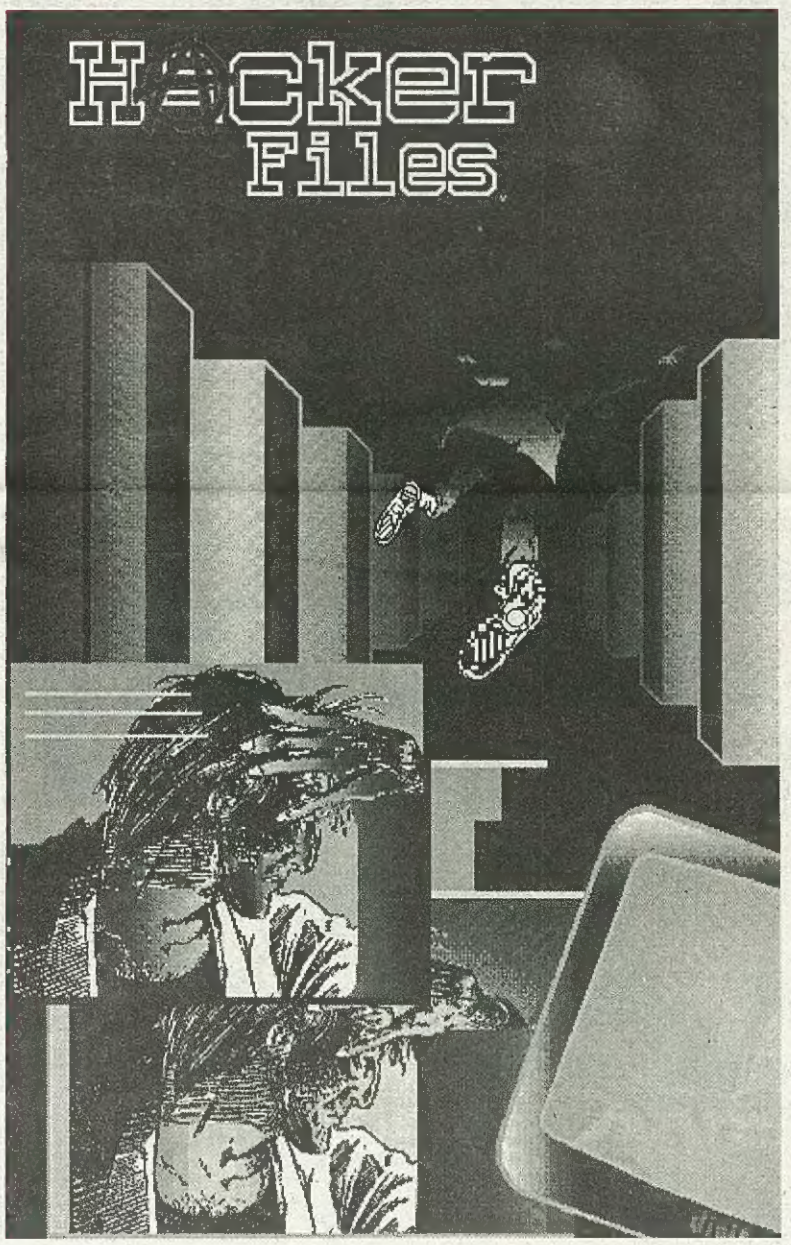
Penguin Triumphant, a 48-page prestige-format one-shot written by John Ostrander and illustrated by Joe Staton and Robin Smith, introduces a different Penguin--he's gone straight, it seems, and he's determined to become a legitimate businessman. That's not necessarily good news for Batman, though, because the Penguin's new financial adversary is Gotham City millionaire Bruce Wayne! ***Penguin Triumphant*** is also slated for a June 11th release.

Brian Stelfreeze, the acclaimed artist whose work has recently appeared on the covers of ***Batman*** and ***Catwoman*** trade paperbacks and will soon be seen on the cover of the newest Batman title, ***Shadow of the Bat***, supplies fully painted interactive covers for both ***Catwoman Defiant*** and ***Penguin Triumphant***--but those of you who are too impatient to wait until early June can enjoy them here on the covers of ***CSN!*** Each $4.95 book will feature foil accenting on the covers.

by CLIFF BIGGERS



Hacker Is Back--and Boy, Is He Hacked Off!...



The Hacker Files, originally announced as a fall '91 debut and subsequently postponed, has been added to the DC again beginning in June--and when he finally introduces himself to DC's readers, their perception of the DC Universe won't ever be quite the same again.

Jack Marshall, also known as Hacker, is perhaps the most brilliant computer hardware and software designer in the world. He is the man behind the Digitronix Computer, the system that seems to pervade every part of the DC Universe; as the Digitronix system's designer, he knows how to solve any problem--if it's solvable, that is! Marshall brings a touch of cyber-punk to the DC Universe in this new series written by Lewis Shiner, a former computer programmer and technical writer who is also well known for his sf novels and his work on ***Wild Cards*** and DC's ***Time Masters*** series. Shiner is joined by artists Tom Sutton and Mark Buckingham; Tom Canty supplies the computer-generated photo covers.

The Hacker Files will tie in the with DC Universe; guest appearances by such characters as Sarge Steel, Barbara Gordon, and Green Lantern will underscore the book's links with DC continuity. The twelve-issue miniseries begins on June 25th; each issue is priced at $1.95.

by ALEX KIRKLAND

Innovation Offers Light Adventure

Innovation Comics began its Terry Pratchett adaptations in 1990 with ***The Colour of Magic,*** the first novel in the Discworld series. Beginning in June, the company continues its adaptations with the second Discworld novel, ***The Light Fantastic.***

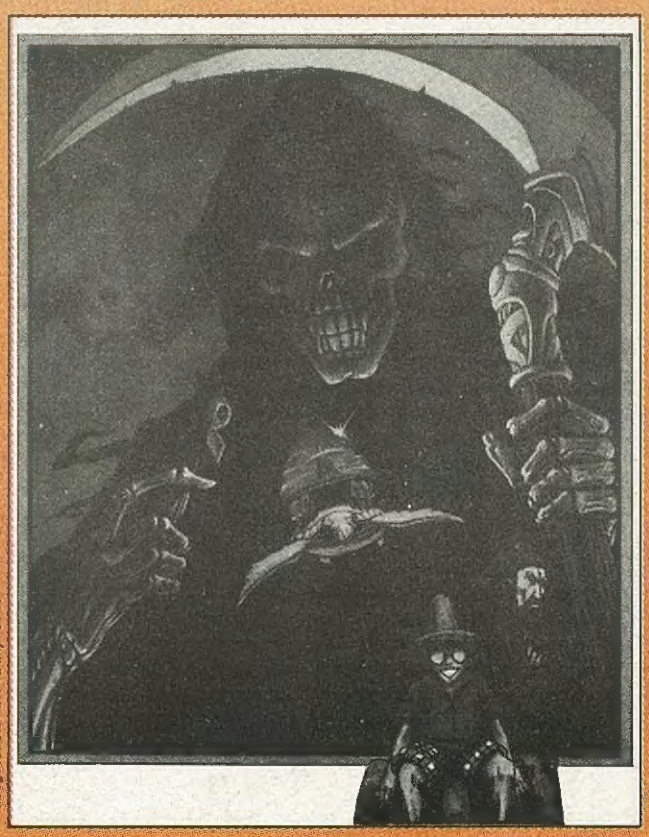
"Out of all the big novel licenses we have been developing, ***The Colour of Magic*** was the first project placed in England as a graphic novel," Diana Light of Innovation said. "As a result, we began negotiating a deal with Terry's agent and his British book publisher to start the second novel in the series."

The Light Fantastic continues the Discworld storyline, which currently runs through eight Pratchett novels, all of which have been very successful in England. "The story in ***The Light Fantastic*** picks up right after the end of ***The Colour of Magic,*** so we get to see Rincewind and Twoflower saved from dropping over the edge of the world," adaptation author Scott Rockwell said. "This novel is structured very differently from the first one. ***The Colour of Magic*** is a novel containing four separate short stories, so it fit very neatly into four issues; ***The Light Fantastic*** is a novel with one continuing storyline, so it was more of a challenge to make it work graphically--but I think the result is actually better... I think Discworld fans and readers who enjoy intelligent, fast-paced comedy--and good art--will like it a lot."

The Light Fantastic is illustrated by Steven Ross, the artist who previously illustrated ***The Colour of Magic.*** Ross is supplying the painted covers for all four issues of the miniseries in addition to the interior art.

According to Innovation, the company hopes to offer ***The Colour of Magic*** as a 132-page trade paperback later this year; they also have plans to continue adapting the remaining Discworld novels.

by CLIFF BIGGERS



COMICS SHOP NEWS™
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QUICKSHOTS

Punisher Special Tells a Sade, Sade Story

Last summer, Marvel's **Punisher Summer Special** introduced a throw-away character who turned out to be anything but a throw-away--DeSade, the sadistic villain who not only wants to destroy the Punisher, but make that destruction as painful as possible. In **Punisher Summer Special #2**, DeSade is back in a full-length 48-page special comic written by *Pat Mills* (whose **Marshal Law** has featured its own share of sadistic villainy) and *Mike McKone*. According to Marvel's *Kevin Tang*, "DeSade has elaborate movie sets made based upon popular movie scenarios that require the Punisher to jeapordize his life in order to save trapped civilians. For instance, the Punisher must rescue a young woman before a speeding locomotive runs her over. However, DeSade shrewdly plants one trap that the Punisher cannot escape from! And that trap certainly means death!" **Punisher Summer Special #2**, a $2.50 comic featuring a painted cover by *Simon* (**Lobo**) *Bisley*, is scheduled for June 4th release.

Punisher™ &©1992 Marvel Comics

TekNikka™ &©1992 Quality

Cyber-Sexy

Hajime Sorayama is the master of a rather unusual category of illustration--the "sexy robot" school of art. Sorayama's stunning work has appeared in art books already; beginning this summer, though, fans will be able to appreciate it in a much higher quality when Fleetway-Quality debuts its series of museum-quality full-color lithographs featuring large-sized reproductions of some of Sorayama's best work.

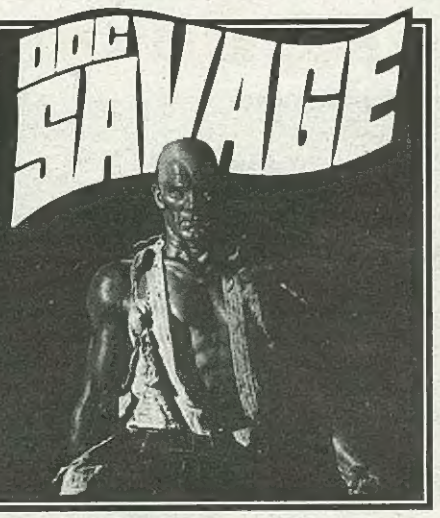
The first Sorayama piece produced in this lithograph series will be **TekNikka,** which exemplifies Sorayama's mastery of textures, from the glimmer of polished steel to the translucence of sheer fabric. The 24" x 36" lithograph is priced at $19.95--and, as with all specialty items of this sort, be sure to let the folks at your local comic shop know that you're interested (and tell 'em that **CSN** sent you, okay?).

It's Not Quite What You Asked For...

In our recent **CSN Red K Awards Reader Update,** one of the many requested "dream matches" was a Wolverine-Lobo confrontation. Well, Eclipse can't quite deliver that--after all, they don't publish either of those heroes--they *can* deliver a parody of the same battle. That's just what they do, in fact, in **Loco Vs. Pulverine,** a 32-page black and white comic slated for May release. In this story written by *Steve Donnelly* and illustrated by *Gary Yap*, the two tough guys of their respective universes are featured in a no-holds-barred confrontation that really settles nothing about who's truly the toughest--but it's sure to be entertaining enough to Lobo and Wolverine fans that they'll enjoy it nonetheless. As Eclipse says, "Expect the fight of the century, with plenty of guest stars pummeling each other senseless." **Loco Vs. Pulverine #1** (does this mean that there may be more?...) is priced at $2.50.

The Savage Shirt

Perhaps the most appropriate Doc Savage shirt would be a tattered off-white cotton broadcloth as depicted on so many Doc Savage paperback covers--but since fans might not look quite as good in that shirt as Doc himself, the second-best choice is a **Doc Savage T-shirt** depicting the Man of Bronze in that classic tattered top that *James Bama* made famous. And that's just what Graphitti Designs is offering in June: their **Doc Savage shirt** is a heavyweight cotton black shirt with the classic Doc Savage image from the cover of the Bantam paperback of **Doc Savage #1: The Man of Bronze**. "The photo-realistic style and colors of artist James Bama have inspired a generation of artists--and with good reason," Graphitti's *Bob Chapman* said. "Catch Doc Savage at his finest and be one of the first with this dynamite shirt design." The **Doc Savage T-Shirt** is priced at $14.95 ($17.95 for XXL); as with all specialty items of this sort, let your local comic shop know that you're interested--and tell 'em that you heard about it in **CSN,** okay?...

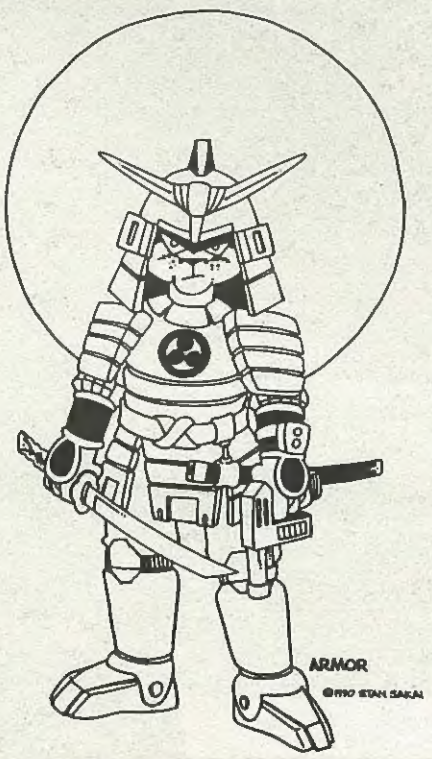


The Phantom Returns

The Phantom of the Opera, originally announced by Innovation Comics as a 1991 release, is now ready to ship this May. The 68-page prestige-format comic , adapting *Gaston LeRoux*'s famous gothic horror novel, is written by *Mitchell Perkins* and painted by *Wanda Daughton*. Innovation promises that **The Phantom of the Opera**, a $6.95 graphic novel, is ready to print and ship, so you can count on seeing it this spring.

Hares In Space

Usagi Yojimbo lives in feudal Japan--but his familiar-looking ancestor, Space Usagi, calls the stars his home. **Space Usagi** may take place in a space-age future, but the world has a great deal in common with feudal japan. In the three-issue miniseries, Usagi must help forge an alliance by aiding his lord in getting his son married to the princess of a neighboring feudal state. While the plot may sound timeless, the action isn't; the story begins in the midst of a space battle that would thoroughly baffle the original Usagi Yojimbo. **Space Usagi,** a $2 comic, is written and illustrated by *Stan Sakai*; according to Mirage Press, the publishers of the series, "**Space Usagi** has all the action, excellent writing, and imaginative anthropomorphic illustration that Stan Sakai is known for." Look for it in June--but if you can't wait that long, you might want to check out the previews in the back of **Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles** #s 46 and 47.



ANNUALS
The System Bytes™
writer Greg Wright
penciler M. C. Wyman
inker Chris Ivy
writer Peter David
penciler Steven Butler
inker Dan Panosian
writer Gerald Jones
penciler Darick Robertson
inker Ian Akin
writer Jim Valentino
penciler Herb Trimpe
inker Steve Montano
PUNISHER #5 PART 1
DAREDEVIL #8 PART 2
WONDER MAN #1 PART 3
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY #2 PART 4
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Dan Barry Goes Crazyman

Crazyman, the Continuity title originally illustrated by the late *Will Jungkuntz*, has found a new artist: *Dan Barry*, whose work has recently been seen on Dark Horse's **Young Indiana Jones Chronicles** and **Predator: Bloody Sands of Time**, will begin illustrating **Crazyman** with the third issue. According to *Neal Adams*, Continuity's publisher, "Dan has pencilled a number of comics for us, but his most recent work on **Crazyman** is the best work I've ever seen him do. Dan's not really a superhero artist, even though he's done some beautiful work on Ms. Mystic for us. **Crazyman** is comic-book action, but very real... Crazyman is such a hard character to find an artist for. You know, guys in suits fighting is not what this market is used to. I thought we'd have to go to Europe for an artist. Then Dan Barry came along, one of my all-time favorite artists. What a thrill to have one of my very personal favorite artists work on one of my favorite creations..."

According to writer **Peter Stone**, the storyline in the fourth and fifth issues of the series will feature an homage to **The Prisoner** television series. "I must say, it's *not* **The Prisoner**, just a story that explores the concepts that series explored. Breaking down a man, forcing a man to conform, that type of thing. Then, what happens when a crazy man is thrown in as a random force? Total chaos." **Crazyman #3** is slated for June release; after that, the book is slated for bi-monthly publication.

Felines...Nothing More Than Felines...

When you think of Hellraiser's Cenobites, you really don't think of fluffy little kitty cats, do you? While the Cenobites aren't particularly fond of cats, one of their "converts" is--and **Hellraiser #15**, a July 2nd release, features her story in "Of Love, Cats, and Curiosity." In this tale by *James Moore* and *Ricardo Villagran*, an old woman makes a deal with the Cenobites to exact vengeance on a man who tortured her beloved cats--and now it's time for her to deliver on her end of the bargain. **Hellraiser #15** will also include two installments of the ongoing "Devil's Brigade" storyline, one by *Saltzgaber* and *Vosburg* and the other by *Chichester, McDuffie,* and *Jones*. **Hellraiser #15** is priced at $4.95.

Off To See the Wizard...

Wizard #10 is one issue that *Rob Liefeld* fans dare not miss--not only does it include a Rob Liefeld cover featuring Cable from the X-Force and Shaft from Youngblood (which is also available as a centerfold poster in the same issue) and a lengthy Rob Liefeld interview, but it also contains a special **Youngblood #0 trading card** by Liefeld that will be available nowhere else except in this poly-bagged Wizard. If you want to have a truly complete set of Youngblood trading cards, be sure to latch onto a copy of Wizard #10 as soon as you see it in June--it won't be there long!

Monster Comics Announces New Undertaking

For over a year now, Monster Comics has offered its readers adaptations of classic horror works and new horror-oriented series. This summer, Monster expands its horror line with the addition of their first horror anthology book, **Coffin Blood.** The first 48-page issue will feature six stories by such creators as *Dave Stephenson, Paul Brown, Noel K. Hannan, John Welding, Art Wetherell, Darron Northall*, and *Danny Jenkins*; the first issue's cover is supplied by *Mike Hoffman*, whose work has appeared in such horror publications as **Taboo, Swamp Thing,** and **Hellraiser. Coffin Blood #1**, a $3.95 comic, is scheduled for May release.

A Slip of the Keyboard

Ooops!... We knew better, really...

In the recent **CSN Spring Preview** issue, we referred to Robin as *Jason Todd*--and as everyone knows, Jason Todd died at the hands of the Joker years ago and has since been replaced by new Robin *Tim Drake*. Would you believe that we included it just to see how many of you were reading carefully?... (Judging from the letters and calls we've received, a *lot* of you were...) Okay, it was just an honest mistake--but you have to admit, a story uniting the Demon and Jason Todd *would* be pretty interesting, wouldn't it?...

BROTHER, CAN YOU SPARE AN ARM?
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A TALE YOU'LL ALWAYS DISMEMBER
THE BIG GUNS
STARTING MONTHLY IN MAY FROM
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CSN CHARTS

TOP 50 COMICS

CSN's Top Seller charts are based on figures supplied by the two major distributors, Diamond Distribution and Capital City Distribution, as well as figures by a cross-section of comics speciality shops. The distributor's figures represent retailer orders placed on the titles, while the infor-mation from stores represents copies sold.

1. X-Men 8
2. Incredible Hulk 393
3. X-Force 10
4. Uncanny X-Men 288
5. X-Men Annual 1
6. Ghost Rider 25
7. X-Force Annual 1
8. Amazing Spider-Man 362
9. Uncanny X-Men Annual 16
10. Spider-Man 22
11. Wolverine 54
12. X-Factor Annual 7
13. Punisher War Zone 3
14. Nomad 1
15. X-Factor 78
16. Warlock & the Infinity Watch 4
17. Cage 2
18. Captain America 400
19. Excalibur 50
20. Punisher 63
21. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 30
22. Silver Surfer 65
23. New Warriors 23
24. Incredible Hulk Annual 18
25. Batman: Gotham Nights 3
26. Batman 477
27. Deathlok 11
28. Aliens: Hive 2
29. Batman 478
30. Darkhawk 15
31. Next Men 2
32. Marvel Comics Presents 101
33. Avengers 347
34. Web of Spider-Man 88
35. Spectacular Spider-Man 188
36. Marvel Comics Presents 102
37. Marvel Comics Presents 103
38. Guardians of the Galaxy 24
39. Punisher War Journal 48
40. Detective 644
41. Avengers West Coast 82
42. Namor 26
43. Thor 447
44. Fantastic Four 344
45. Wonder Man 9
46. Quasar 34
47. What If? 37
48. Justice League America 62
49. Armageddon: Inferno 2
50. Dr. Strange 41

TOP DOLLAR COMICS

The following comics, graphic novels and trade paperbacks were given Top Dollar ratings based on the dollar volume of the copies sold (or are expected to sell) during the late March and April sales period.

1. Incredible Hulk 393
2. Ghost Rider 25
3. X-Men Annual 1
4. X-Force Annual 1
5. Uncanny X-Men Annual 16
6. X-Men 8
7. Spider-Man 22
8. X-Force 10
9. Wolverine 54
10. X-Factor Annual 7
11. Uncanny X-Men 288
12. Nomad 1
13. Excalibur 50
14. Punisher War Zone 3
15. Captain America 400
16. Amazing Spider-Man 362
17. Warlock & the Infinity Watch 4
18. Incredible Hulk Annual 18
19. Aliens: Hive 2
20. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 30
21. Next Men 2
22. X-Factor 78
23. Cage 2
24. Deathlok 11
25. Star Trek Annual 3
26. Punisher 63
27. Avengers 347
28. Silver Surfer 65
29. Marvel Comics Presents 101
30. New Warriors 23
31. Solar: Man of the Atom 10
32. Batman: Gotham Nights 3
33. Marvel Comics Presents 102
34. Marvel Comics Presents 103
35. Punisher War Journal 42
36. Incredible Hulk Milestone Edition 1
37. Batman 477
38. Shado: Song of the Dragon 2
39. Batman 478
40. Darkhawk 15
41. Web of Spider-Man 88
42. Spectacular Spider-Man 188
43. Guardians of the Galaxy 24
44. Hard Boiled 3
45. Death's Head II 3
46. Avengers West Coast 82
47. Warlock 1
48. Dr. Strange 41
49. Deathstroke the Terminator 10
50. Namor 26

TOP 10 BLACK & WHITE COMICS

1. Dark Horse Presents 60
2. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 45
3. Doc Savage 3
4. Cerebus 156
5. The Crow 2
6. Savage Sword of Conan 196
7. Usagi Yojimbo 33
8. Evil Ernie 4
9. Conan Saga 62
10. Striker 1

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TOP TEN NON-COMICS

The Top Ten Non-Comics is based on number and not dollar value. This category includes graphic novels, hardcovers, trade paperbacks, portfolios, etc. It includes books that actually were on sale during the March sales period.

1. X-Men Cards (Impel)
2. Spider-Man Cards
3. DC Universe Trading Cards
4. Marvel Universe Handbook 18
5. Elfquest Volume 8 TPB
6. Spider-Man Masterworks TPB 1
7. Daredevil: Gang War
8. Wizard 8
9. Impact Who's Who 3
10. Carl Barks Library Album 2

marc m

an epic editor uncaged

Anyone who thinks of Marvel as just a superhero comics company really needs to acquaint themselves with the books edited by Marc McLaurin. From the horror of Hellraiser to the human interest and strong characterization of Tales From the Heart of Africa, McLaurin takes readers into worlds far beyond the normal Marvel superhero universe. He hasn't abandoned that world, though, either as an editor or a writer. Terror, Inc., a new title edited by McLaurin, is a mainline Marvel title–but one with a decidedly different protagonist, a professional assassin! As a writer, McLaurin continues to create the new adventures of Luke Cage in the pages of Cage, one of this year's "Big Guns" hits. McLaurin recently took time from his extremely busy schedule to talk to CSN about his work as an editor and a writer.

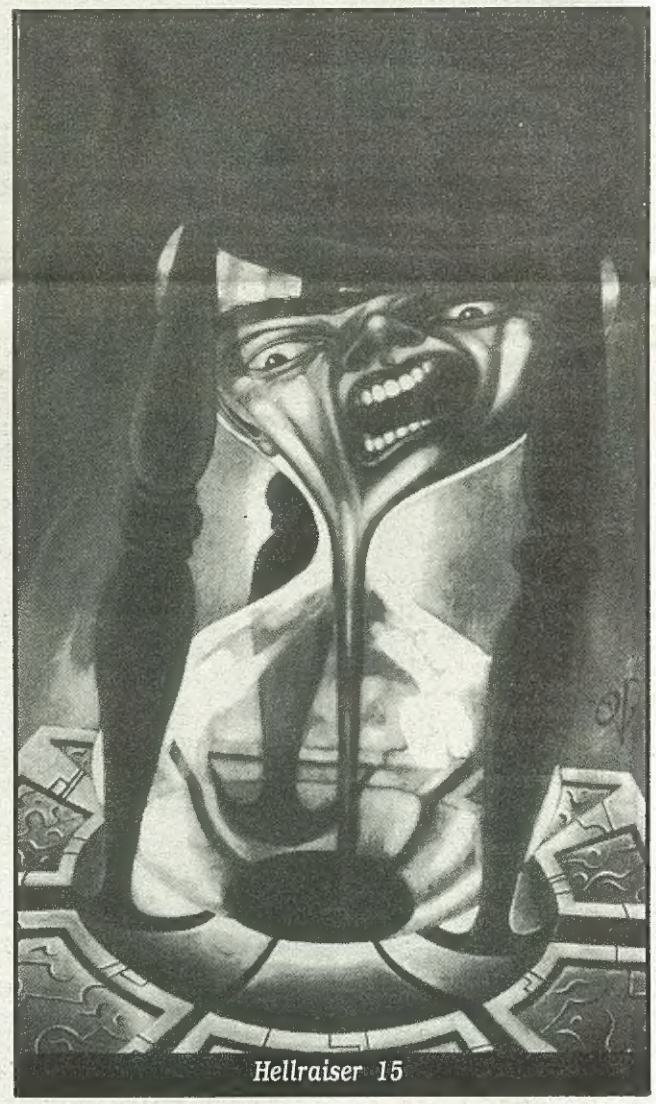
Your Clive Barker books are the highest-profile titles that you edit. What's coming up, now that the Devil's Brigade storyline is wrapping up?

The Clive Barker books are in transition right now; I might be passing some of those books along to someone else in the near future. I have a lot of things in the works for those books, though.

First, there's the ***Hellraiser III*** movie adaptation, which was written by Pete Atkins, who is also the writer of the screen play; he has written for ***Hellraiser*** in the past. This story fleshes out the origin of Pinhead; it reveals things about him that we never knew. People have pieced together bits of Pinhead's background from what we saw in the second movie, but the third movie reveals that what we thought we knew was wrong. The third film is really Pinhead's story; we'll reveal more information about the person who we thought we saw transformed into Pinhead in the second film. We didn't really see him transformed into Pinhead, though, as much as we saw him absorbed; Pinhead is a much more ancient force than just that figure.

Pinhead becomes a rogue Cenobite; the reasons for that are what the story is about. The adaptation is being illustrated by Miran Kim; she's the one who painted the story "Closets" for ***Hellraiser.*** She took on the job understanding that she wouldn't have a lot of time to do it, because we thought it would have to be ready by early May; it's now been moved back on the schedule, though, so we have more time for her to work on the details of this adaptations. She's a very good choice for a film adaptation, because she has a very realistic style and a good understanding of comic book structure and style.

Hellraiser III the comic will include some details and some scenes that won't be in the film--and vice versa. I told Pete to approach it as a new project when he did the scripting; he approached it from the angle of a comic book project. He had a framework to work within, but he constructed it so that ***Hellraiser III*** would read as a really good comic. There are some scenes that he was able to go into greater detail on that he did in the film.



Hellraiser 15

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What new storylines are being developed for Hellraiser? Will there be another ongoing story arc?

Hellraiser is approaching the end of the Devil's Brigade very quickly. At the end of that story, we're going to introduce a new plot point that will spring into its own series next year. This adds a whole new dimension to the Hellraiser universe. People have complained that there hasn't been a positive, constructive force powerful enough to oppose the Cenobites; we're going to introduce such a force, based on a "bible" written by Clive Barker. It's called ***The Harrowers***; it's a group of six individuals summoned by a goddess to rescue her from imprisonment, where she's been trapped for millennia by Leviathan. Because she's been imprisoned, Leviathan has had access to the world, to humanity; a series of earthquakes enables her to summon agents who are drawn by a force they don't understand, and they free her. Subsequently, they're given miraculous powers and six weapons of power: a lasso, a machete, a sword, an axe, a boomerang, and a dagger. Those six weapons of power are given to each of them, along with miraculous abilities that enable them to fight the Cenobites toe to toe without fear.

The wounds these Harrowers experience instantly heal, so they're in effect immune to the Cenobites' attacks. They also have unique abilities; one of them, a woman--well, her bodily fluids are corrosive to the Cenobites. She can spit on them, bleed on them, and it affects them like a strong acid. Another is a masochist; he enjoys the pain that the Cenobites bring, so he welcomes when they attack him because they can't give him anything more than what he wants. All the members of the Harrowers have very typically Barkerian twists to them; one of the members is actually two people, a pair of female twins who are very British, very proper, very much in love with one another, and who function as one unit. Together, they are able to summon Ovid, another entity--a winged cherub who does everything that he can bedazzle the Cenobites.

Each member of the Harrowers is unique; they're also not always good. One of them was summoned by MorteMamme from her place on death row, where she's awaiting execution as a mass murderess; she was a waitress in a diner, and she poisoned several people who annoyed her. She will still have the FBI after her, even though she's going into hell and saving souls and bringing them back to earth.

That's another element that Barker has added, by the way; once an individual is rescued from hell, she is brought back to MorteMamme, who absorbs them into herself; she then births them anew, and they're reborn in the same form as they were originally. They then have twenty-four hours on earth to make good whatever they want, correcting any wrongs and paying any debts; that's their last chance in this world to do whatever they want to do before they become permanently transformed into something else. What they'll be transformed into, no one can say--they could be transformed into a little girl, a breadbox, a bug, an old man. Once they're transformed, though, that's what they remain.

mclaurin

by cliff biggers

The Harrowers claim to be ignorant of the Hellraiser mythology--and all but one of them are not pretending. One of them really knows about the Cenobites, though, because his brother and his father and his father's father and his father's father's father have all been taken into Hell and given an opportunity to rise in the ranks very quickly. In effect, he belongs to a legacy of Hell; his predecessors are the higher ranks of the Cenobitic "military," so to speak. This one boy, however, rebelled against his militaristic heritage; he was a "peacenik," and as a result, he opposes the Cenobites. He wants to use the Harrowers as a way to rescue his brother and his father, to save his family. Ironically, he's becoming far more militaristic as a result of his efforts; the Harrowers are, after all, a sort of military unit, a type of crack commando team.

He wants to rescue his brother, who has been transformed into a Cenobite. Now, the Harrowers are sent to Hell to rescue Cenobites--Cenobites are beyond help. They're supposed to rescue tortured souls and bring them back to MorteMamme to be transformed. Those souls must be reborn through MorteMamme, but he wants to break those rules and "deprogram" his brother from his Cenobite identity; he doesn't want him reborn, because he wants his brother back.

The Harrowers have been given tremendous powers; but they didn't really choose to do this. Had they been given a choice, some of them might not have taken on this role.

We give a prequel to the Harrowers' story in ***Hellraiser #16***; the Harrowers will actually be introduced in ***Hellraiser #17***, then they move to their own book next year. One of the characters' past will be outlined in the second ***Hellraiser: Book of the Damned***. The first year of the Harrowers' new comic is going to be plotted by Barker himself; we're also going to have some really top artists working on it, such as Kelley Jones, Simon Bisley, and Sam Kieth.

This is going to be such a significant portion of the Hellraiser mythology that we're going to devote two full issues of the anthology series. One story will introduce you to the mythology; the majority of the issue, though, will be taken up with an introduction to the Harrowers. There will continue to be at least one Harrower story in ***Hellraiser*** for a while, but beginning next year, they're going to move into their own series to more fully explore their potentials.

Is Nightbreed continuing in its current direction?

Nightbreed is continuing, but there's a big change very soon. First, we have a three-issue story arc about a small town plagued by werewolves; the original Nightbreed who infected this town is dead, so when the Nightbreed come to town to "collect" this person, to bring him back to the fold and talk him out of his evil ways, they discover that he's dead and that the people he's infected in the town are much more wild than the original Nightbreed ever was. The Nightbreed have no way of knowing who in the town are the werewolves, but they much find them before the curse can be allowed to spread and draw too much attention to the Nightbreed. A hunter who is brought in to track down the werewolves discovers the secrets of the Nightbreed; before too long, we have a lot of conflicts between the town, the werewolves, the Nightbreed, and the hunter. This three-issue story arc is written by Gregory Wright and pencilled by Tony Harris. Tony has done some really fabulous stuff here. That story is going to be inked by Mark Nelson; a lot of fans know him from his work on ***Aliens***.

After that, we get really big changes. These changes are based on a lot of story details that were set up by Dan Chichester in the pages of ***Jihad***. Dan's not regularly writing ***Nightbreed*** any more--although he will do some stories in the future. We had to address some of the things he set up in the pages of ***Jihad;*** to address that,I called on Nicholas Vince, who has been working closely with Clive Barker, to bring some changes to ***Nightbreed.*** He's the actor who played the Chatterer in ***Hellraiser*** and Kinski in ***Nightbreed.*** He's going to do a storyline that involves the women of the Nightbreed as they try to address the problem of Cabal and Baphomet being linked. They were united at the end of Jihad so that they could fight Leviathan; at the end of that, they were still linked together. We're going to discover that Cabal, in addition to being linked to Baphomet, is also linked with the souls of the previous six saviors of the Nightbreed, and they're now looking to come out. Each of them is vying for power now; as this is happening, these six Nightbreed "patron saints" have their own followers who are trying to assist their "patron saints" to come out. Now Baphomet is the least of these "saviors" because he's having to submerge himself in an effort to control these six. This will re-establish who the Nightbreed are, what their goals are, and what motivates them.

As I said, the Barker books may be in transition; Clive is in the process of starting up a new line of perhaps four or five new titles, mainline books that'll be distributed in newsstands and comic shops. There'll be a formal announcement about this later on in the year, but since I may be editing those new books, I may have to pass some of other Barker projects on to another editor.

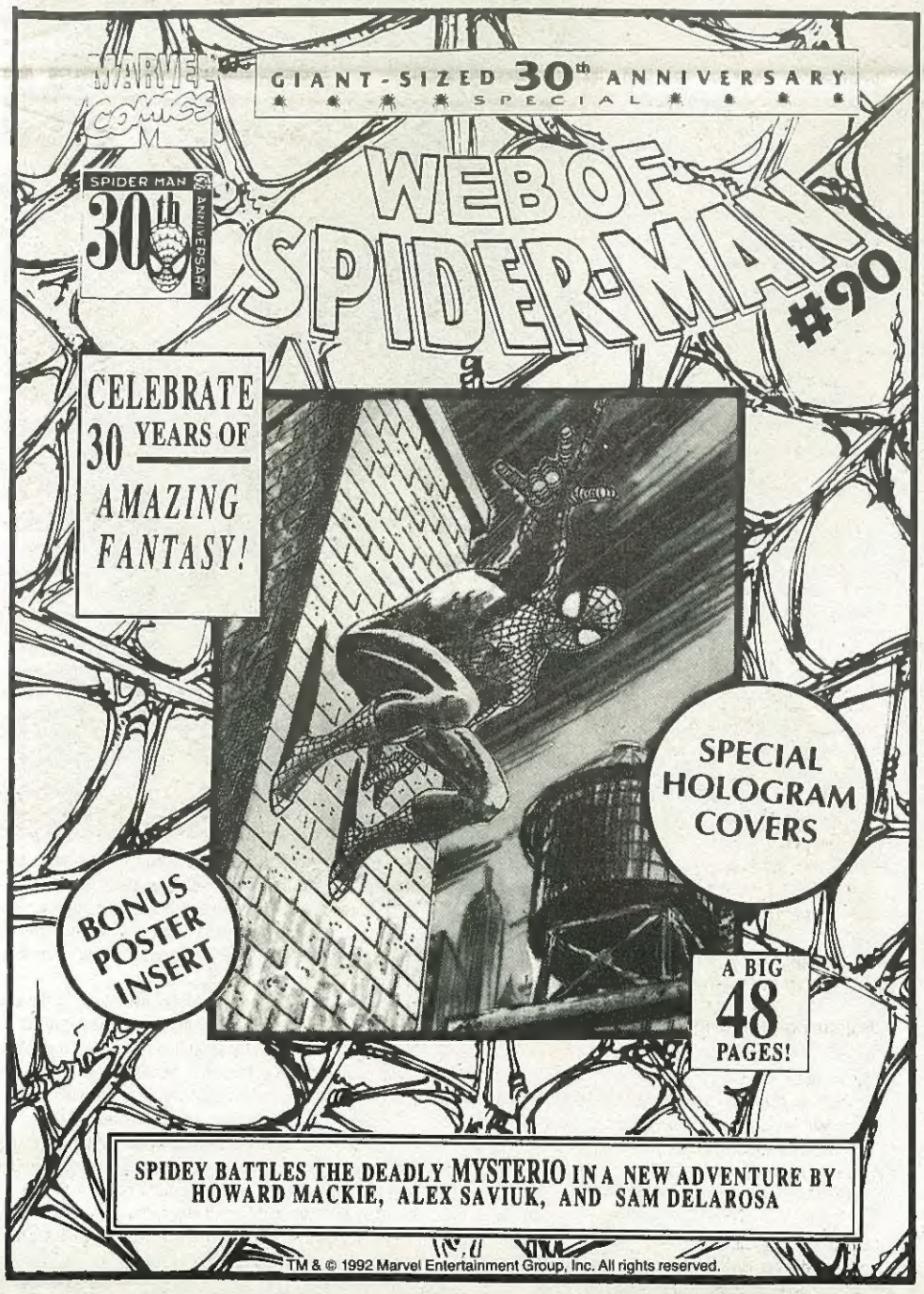
Your latest editorial project, Terror, Inc., is a real break for you; it's a Marvel title, not an Epic, and it's set in the Marvel Universe. What's the premise of this series?

Terror, Inc. is a book set in the Marvel Universe with a strong horror overtone--and it's code approved! It's like sex in the old movies; the characters may have had sex in the old films, but directors didn't show it. You don't have to have graphic violence in a comic to make it horrible; that's one of the strong aspects of Terror,Inc. It's a very clear book, a very understandable book, but it implies a lot of its more graphic horror rather than showing it.

Terror is set in the Marvel Universe, but he's an underground character. If you're an assassin and you're smart, you don't make yourself known to people unless you have to. Terror is smart; while comes into contact with super-powered characters, he doesn't let them know who he is or what he is capable of. If Terror wants to kill someone and that person is being protected by Spider-Man, then he won't be able to kill them without killing Spider-Man--and that's obviously not worth it to him, so he'd pass on the job. If he's given enough money and told to kill Spider-Man, though--well, that's another story.

Terror will meet the Punisher fairly early in the series; he's going to fight the Punisher for the right to kill his victim. He and the Punisher are after the same individual, with an army and an arsenal at their disposal, and they're working against each other

Terror, Inc.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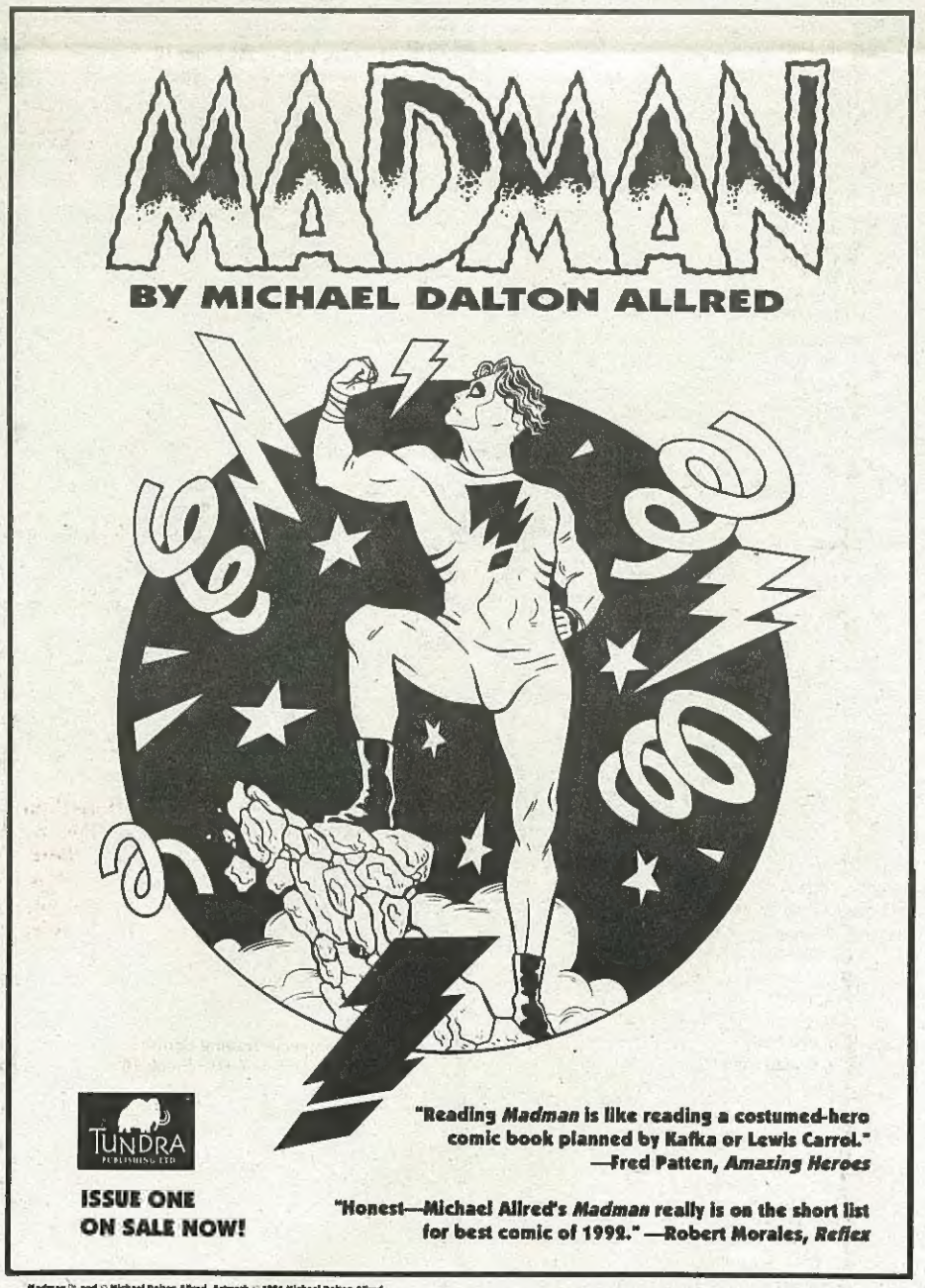
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for the right to kill this guy. The Punisher kills people because he's driven; Terror kills people because he's paid for it. He's going after people who are reprehensible, so he functions as the protagonist--but he's really an amoral hero, so there's nothing that says he has to target bad guys.

Dan Chichester is writing ***Terror, Inc.***; it's being drawn by Jorge Zaffino. He's working very quickly on this series, getting way ahead--and that's always good when you're dealing with someone who lives in another country , since a lot of things can go wrong and slow down the process. He's very fast, which helps a lot. He's a very strong artist, a great designer--a lot like Alex Toth. A lot of fans don't latch onto his style quite as easily as they do the flashier artists, though; he's an acquired taste.

The storyline with the Punisher is going to be followed up by a storyline with Wolverine. Before all that, though, there's a storyline that'll tie in with the new Hellstorm series. We find the half brother of Damien Hellstorm, the son who didn't make it, who didn't get the Darksoul. Mikal Dragonmegas wasn't raised to be a demon like his half-brother. His mother died before he was born; he was taken out by caesarean section, so he never knew his mother or his father. As it turns out, his father was the same demon who was the father of Hellstorm, and his mother died trying to drive his father away once she discovered his true nature.

Terror is called on to kill a munitions dealer who is protected by a demon; to kill his victim, he has to go to hell and break the munitions dealer's pact with the demon. To do this, he has to find some way to go to hell; in figuring out how to do this, he finds Mikal Dragonmegas, who gives him his pathway to hell.

You're also editing Ted McKeever's books Metropol, another title that doesn't fit in with the Marvel mainstream. Is that continuing?

Metropol is ending soon, but I'm also editing a new ***Metropol A.D.*** series, which picks up a year after the end of ***Metropol.*** One of the angels has given birth, so there's an angelic child born of a woman who died; this child angel is going to become a very powerful entity. The storyline involves a surrender, though; during the year that we haven't seen, the humans have banded together with the angels to form an underground pocket of resistance to battle the demons who now run the city. During the course of the story, they discover that they can't function in hiding; they have to act openly to save the humans who are left and then destroy the demons. They do that with the use of a thermonuclear device; they intend to set that off and destroy the city, fighting to get out before it's too late.

Metropol A.D. is a three-issue limited series beginning in September. Ted's doing all the work on it, and it'll definitely be a monthly series. This is going to be a very exciting, very tight storyline with a lot more action and a quicker pace; there will be much more happening per issue, and the storyline will have a strong beginning, middle, and end.

What else are you involved with?

I'm working on ***67 Seconds,*** a graphic novel by James Robinson and Steve Yeowell. It's a story set in the near future; it's a quasi-retro future that follows a conventional Third World War. The countries have new borders the power structure has shifted, dirigibles are in fashion, rockets are a mode of transportation, and retro fashions have brought back the look of the 40's and the 50's. The story follows a female reporter and the photographer who accompanies her; he has fallen in love with her, but it's an unrequited love. The whole story is told around the framing device of a 67 second timespan as the photographer scrambles about on a roof, trying to grab hold of the tow rope of a dirigible on which she is being held captive. While trying to save her, he recounts his experiences with her in this graphic novel. The primary theme is love--both shy love and demanding love--and transformation.

Most of my work is outside of the superhero field, but I'm also working on a superhero series. It's called ***Marvels,*** and it's a four issue limited series written by Kurt Busiek and fully painted by Alex Russ. It's the history of the Marvel Universe through the eyes of a reporter; it's an outsider's view of the Marvel Universe. In the comics, we see how the passerby on the street looks up and sees Spider-Man and says, "He's a criminal." Well, now we're going to see the everyday person's viewpoint; this reporter is human, so he has his own reactions to deal with. How does it affect your life when you see beings like Silver Surfer and Galactus? It's going to explore that normal man's viewpoint as he deals with a world filled with super-beings and demigods.

I'm also editing ***Alien Legion,*** which is continuing as a series of limited series. The first project of this summer is ***Alien Legion Featuring Jugger Grimrod,*** a one-shot featuring Jugger on a planet that isn't at all what he expected. He's actually taken this assignment from another Legionnaire; he's heard that this is a plum assignment on a planet that only the best people are sent to, almost a vacation, so he pulls strings and does some underhanded things to get this assignment. As it turns out, it's like the sort of promotion that Greenland got in the Viking era, when they called it "Greenland" to trick people into coming there--but there's almost no green! Once he gets there, he discovers that the Legion is a disheveled mess, there's an impending mutiny, the planet is dirt-poor and at the mercy of nomadic warriors who keep things at a state of near-barbarism. The Legion only checks on this planet every five years; they'll come back in a couple of months to see if he's completed the assignment, or else he's there for five years. Jugger is racing against the clock to make everything right--and since he's a rebel, getting other people in line is against his personality. This one-shot is written by Chuck Dixon and illustrated by Mike McMahon. It's supposed to be out in September.

There's a second ***Alien Legion*** project entitled ***Alien Legion: One Planet at a Time.*** It takes place after the ***Jugger Grimrod*** book, and it introduces a new character called No'or. He's a Legion pariah, a survivor who seems to bring about the deaths of all the Legionnaires around him. He shows up during an invasion of a mythological alien race called the Vreel; no one's ever seen these aliens before, but they're supposed to be a powerful race that has immeasurable power. The Legion is sent to investigate an invasion, but they find no evidence of warfare, battles, or anything else. The Vreel are an invisible enemy; no one knows who they are or what they look like. It's written by Chuck Dixon and pencilled by a new artist, Hwang Nguyen. He's doing some very solid work; I could tell you a lot of people his work resembles, people like Jim Lee, but you'll have to see it to believe it.

I also edit ***Groo,*** but that's easy to forget about because everything is pretty much ready to print, thanks to Sergio Aragones and Mark Evanier. It's a great book, but it's hard to find a niche for it; if anyone picks it up, they're bound to enjoy it, but we have to get them to pick it up.

I'm also editing ***The Trouble With Girls: The Girls Sanc-***

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tion, a four-issue limited series written by Will Jacobs and Gerard Jones and illustrated by Bret Blevins and Al Williamson. It's scheduled for early 1993. This series outlines a new status quo for Lester; he's going to work as an agent for MUM. He's been avoiding working for them for quite a while, but he ends up working for them anyway, so he decides to quit fighting the inevitable. MUM is a "super-secret government agency so secret that even the President doesn't know about it"--but during the course of the story, six or seven people describe it exactly that way, so it's not that secret after all. We hope this is the first in a series of limited series.

In addition to your editing work, you're also writing Cage each month. You have to be pleased with the positive response this title has received.

I'm nervously optimistic about ***Cage***, based on its initial response. I started the character off from a certain point--and that point is very similar to where Cage left off in his last series. A lot of people wanted to see a big change in Cage, but I decided I'd rather give them a big change along the course of the series. Usually, when a series starts, you establish a *status quo* and stay with it. Whatever you establish him as, that's where he stays. I'm trying to approach this differently; I'm looking at this character at his current low point and trying to figure out where he needs to be. While it's a low point for Cage personally, the comic is high in action, so it's still an exciting book.

Some people are offended by who Cage is and how he acts, but I'm trying to keep it very realistic in characterization and dialogue. I base a lot of characters' dialogue on people that I know, so I hear specific voices. There's been some reaction to the slang that I've been using, both good and bad; a lot of slang got cut editorially before fans ever saw it, because there was some concern that fans wouldn't understand what the characters were saying. I'm getting good editorial feedback, which helps. When you live in the city, you get exposed to a lot of slang that hasn't made it to the backroads of Iowa. The editor has to balance that and make sure the book is accessible to everyone.

Cage was originally to have been the first mainline comic to have an acetate overlay cover, but plans fell through. Did this bother you?

I was nervous when we first found out that ***Cage*** wouldn't have the acetate overlay cover--and we found out at pretty much the same time as everyone else--because I thought that people might not buy it, or that they might be angry that they didn't get the cover they thought they'd get. Then I thought, "Well, now the book is resting on its own merits." If people bought it, they bought it because they wanted to read the comic, not because they wanted to get that new cover gimmick.

While Cage is thought of as a loner, you've surrounded him by some very richly developed supporting characters as well...

I think it's important that a comic have good supporting characters. The more interesting supporting characters you have, the better your main character looks. The most interesting series, both in comics and television, are those that have the most interesting supporting cast as well as a strong main character. A lot of the perceptions of Cage are going to come from the people around him; it's a conscious effort on my part to keep people distanced from Cage so that they're looking at him, not seeing things through his eyes. When readers do get into Cage's head, they're going to have a very different perception because they'll see how different he is from what he appears to be.

When Cage is in action, he really is a tough guy; it's not just tough talk. When he gets alone, though, he becomes a different person; I want to show the differences in Cage when he's by himself and when he's with a group and he's projecting an image.

What about Cage's old partner, Iron Fist; will he play a role in this new series?

Iron Fist *will* come back, but I have some background to develop. There's a big gap, and I have to fill in those missing pieces. Cage went undercover because he needed to, as it turns out; he had people after him. Charges were dropped later on, but this forced him to reevaluate his life. Then he heard about Danny Rand coming back--but of course, it was really the Super-Skrull--and he went to see him. He received a very harsh rebuff from "Danny," and that was a contributing factor that led him to decide to relocate to Chicago and start over. He wants to start over because he is ultimately a man without roots.

He's very angry against Iron Fist at this point. We'll see some of that anger coming out in ***Cage #7***, when we see his viewpoint of his relationship with Iron Fist. There'll be a reunion between the two characters in ***Cage #s*** 11 and #12, but it won't be what people are expecting. They'll not only come face to face again, they'll also come blow to blow. There's a lot of animosity to work out before they can re-establish a friendship.

Are you working on anything else--if you can find the time?...

I'm also looking to write an occasional graphic novel or one-shot; I don't have time to take on another monthly assignment, but I still have a lot of other stories I'd like to tell. I'm even interested in doing a sort of mainstream Marvel superhero story with Ted McKeever, if we can get an angle on it.

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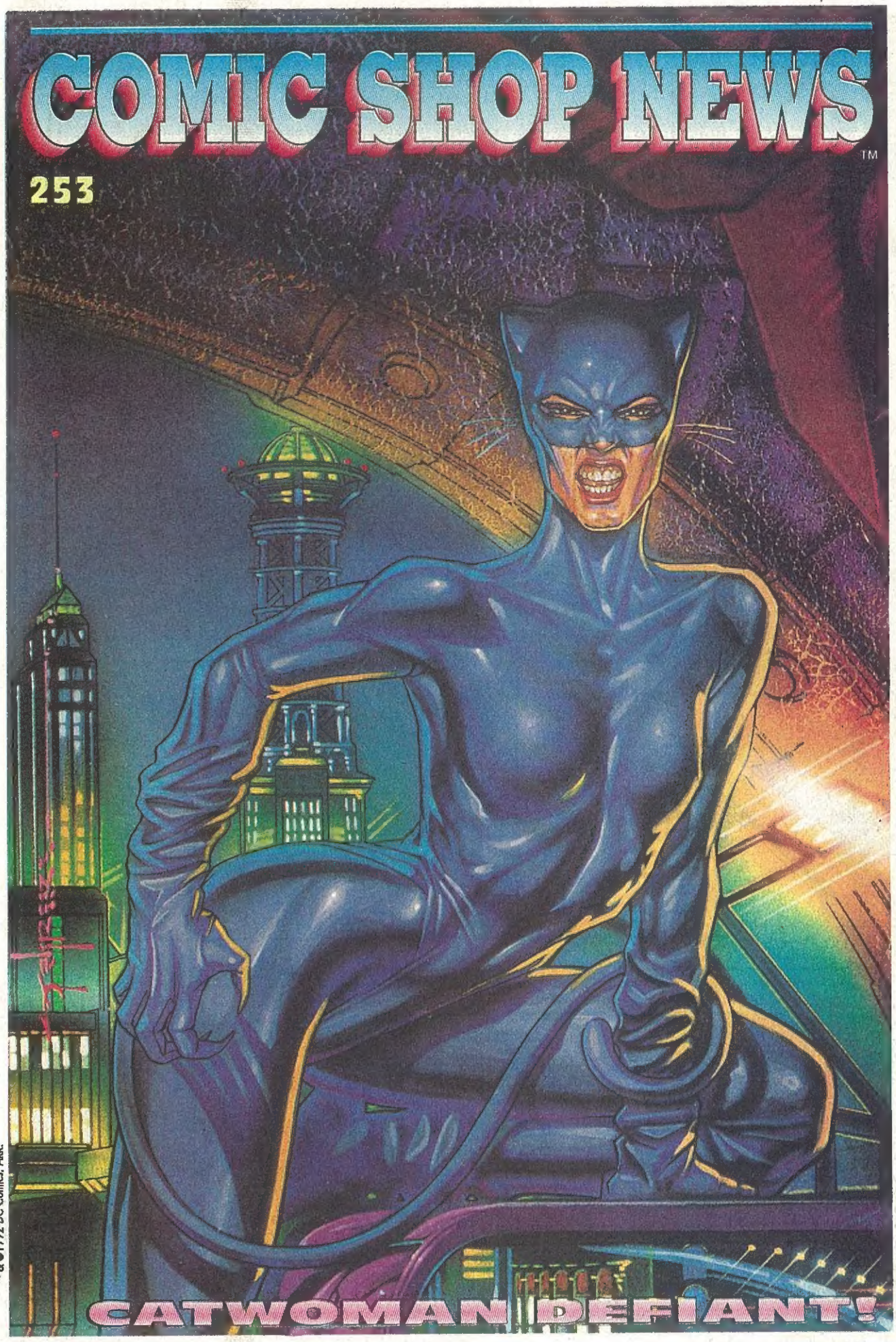

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